



# Tuskegee Airmen made history

By Master Sgt. **Robert Michel**  
332nd AEW historian

Many books and articles have documented the struggles of the Tuskegee Airmen to fly and fight for their country, but what really defines the Tuskegee Airmen of the 332nd Fighter Group is their unique and enviable combat record.

One of the group's greatest claims to fame is the fact that they were the only fighter group in World War II to never lost a bomber to enemy fighter aircraft. They achieved this record while flying against the most advanced enemy aircraft, operating from several different airfields, and conducting combat operations in three different types of fighters.

After advanced training in P-39 Airacobras and P-40 Warhawks, first at Tuskegee, Ala., and later at Selfridge Field, Mich., the 332nd Fighter Group deployed to Europe in 1944, arriving at Montecorvino, Italy, on Feb. 3.

Two days after arrival, they began operations flying P-39s to escort convoys, protect harbors and conduct armed reconnaissance missions.

The P-39, while considered a capable ground attack aircraft, became obsolete by 1944. It could not reach the altitudes required to compete with German Luftwaffe fighters that were used to intercept American B-17 and B-24 bombers.

As the need for bomber escort became

more urgent, the group converted to the more capable but unfamiliar P-47 Thunderbolt in May 1944. They later upgraded to the top-of-the-line P-51C Mustang.

Unfortunately, the enemy had more than just piston-engine fighters. German scientists had been developing advanced weapons for years, including jet and rocket powered fighters specifically

designed to shoot down American and British bombers.

In July 1944, the Germans began using these top secret aircraft, the ME 262 Schwalbe powered by two turbojet engines, and the rocket powered ME 163B Komet.

The ME 262 had a top speed of 540

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# Understanding tax-free leave

By Capt. **Mark Krauss**  
332nd Ground Liason Office

Many of you have been deployed for four months and have earned at least 10 days of tax-free leave. You can check the amount of tax-free leave by looking at the bottom of your LES in the remarks section.

Your tax-free leave is front loaded, meaning that those days will be burned first the next time you take leave. You're already tax-free in the month that you leave the area of responsibility, so if you take leave in that same month, you lose the additional benefit of tax-free leave.

If you wait until a later month to take your tax-free leave, you will get back almost one third of your tax withholding for that month.

So you will receive an extra financial benefit if you wait until the next month after you get home to take leave. In addition, most installations give you plenty of time off in the local area upon your return. You worked hard during your deployment. Enjoy your time off.

## COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE

As a service for Balad Airmen, the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing operates the Commander's Action Line program. The line is a way for Balad AB members to get answers to questions or express concerns about life on the base.

Brig. Gen. Frank Gorenc, 332nd AEW commander, gives action line queries his personal attention. The Red Tail Flyer will publish those items that are judged to be of general interest to the Balad AB population. In addition to using the commander's action line, Balad Airmen are asked to remember their chain of command when dealing with problems and concerns.

The Commander's Action Line can be reached via e-mail at 332cc.action-line@blab.centaf.af.mil. Those using the action line should include name, unit and phone number in case additional information is needed and for a timely response.



Courtesy photo

## A cut above

Then Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Jr., 332nd Fighter Group commander, stands in front of a P-47 Thunderbolt aircraft. Colonel Davis led many World War II missions including a 1,600-mile bomber escort mission to Berlin, Germany. In 1953 he became the first African-American Air Force officer to achieve the rank of general.

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# Controlling the skies: *727th air controllers provide guidance, air picture over Iraq*

By Senior Airman **Shaun Emery**  
332nd AEW Public Affairs

With more than 270,000 square-miles of playing field, members of the 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron have their game faces on, providing command and control of joint air operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Providing surveillance, identification, weapons control, theater missile defense, battlefield management and theater communications links, the 727th EACS has their hands in every aspect of air operations in the Iraqi sky.

With Airmen from 15 different Air Force specialty codes, covering more than 25 specialties including operations, radar, maintenance, ground radio, mission planning, radar, technical control, medical care and intelligence, the 727th EACS is a completely self-contained mobile combat unit.

"Everyone has a role to play," said Capt. Jayson Murgoitio, 727th EACS daytime mission crew commander. "Teamwork and the ability to cover every base is what make our mission a success."

Within their chilly 55-degree operations module, weapons controllers direct air assets to the areas where they're needed, whether it be to direct air-to-ground support or guiding pilots to tankers for refueling. With a multitude of aircraft filling the airspace, the six-hour shifts for weapons directors can be hectic.

"We are constantly tracking aircraft and pushing information to them," said Senior Airman Denise White, 727th EACS weapons director. "The picture is always changing and we need to ensure pilots have the right information."

The picture weapons controllers, mission planners and intelligence personnel use is compiled within the walls of the 727th EACS. Interface control technicians like Senior Airman Charles Arata are responsible for putting that picture together. On what Airman Arata refers to as the "battlefield internet," information is collected, assembled and sent out to agencies that use them in



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chad Chisholm

**Senior Airman Marquis Perkins, 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron, removes a computer unit for repairs.**

their command and control mission.

"By providing a single air picture for Iraq, we help ensure everyone is on the same page," said Airman Arata.

The technological resources needed to maintain control of the sky are not immune to the rigors of a deployed environment like Balad. According to Senior Master Sgt. Dave Mumford, 727th EACS maintenance superintendent, it takes a team of dedicated individuals to keep the equipment running.

"Heat plays a major role here," he said. "A lot of the equipment we use won't perform in hot conditions. Our maintainers know that and work very hard to keep things going."

Keeping an eye on airspace above Iraq, the 727th EACS performs a complex mission where everyone on the team plays an important role.

"We know what needs to be done, and our people do it better than anyone else," said Captain Murgoitio.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chad Chisholm

## ***Assuming command***

Colonel Elisha Powell accepts the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group guidon from Brig. Gen. Frank Gorenc, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing commander, at an assumption of command ceremony at Balad Air Base Wednesday. Colonel Powell is the former commander of the 859th Surgical Operations Squadron and the chief of surgery as part of the 59th Medical Wing, Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

# Leaving a legacy of their own



Photo by Senior Airman Jason Robertson

Airman 1st Class Matthew Richardson loads .50-caliber ammo onto a Humvee before a convoy Wednesday. Detachments 1 and 2, from the 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron converted from their original transportation mission to a convoy escort mission, ensuring goods personnel are safely moved throughout the area of responsibility.

## *732nd ELRS convoy escorts continue proud heritage of the legendary Tuskegee Airmen*

By Senior Airman **Shaun Emery**  
332nd AEW Public Affairs

The 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing is steeped in the rich history of its predecessors, the Tuskegee Airmen of the 332nd Fighter Group. While today's Airmen don't share the hardships of breaking racial barriers in combat, members of Detachment 2, stationed here, and Det. 1, stationed at Camp Speicher, who provide convoy escort for the Army have faced their own challenges.

According to Col. Gary Shick, 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group commander, the Tuskegee Airmen were the most requested bomber escort in World War II. Today, Airmen providing convoy escort in Iraq are becoming the most requested escort units in the area of responsibility.

Only two years ago, an Airman providing convoy escort on an Army mission wasn't thought of, said Colonel Shick.

"In 2003, the Army indicated they were short of combat support units needed to provide safe travel across Iraq," he said. "The Department of Defense turned to the other services to help."

In a matter of months Air Force transportation units morphed their usual load, drive and load, deliver mission into one with Airmen trained for a different kind of battle.

Colonel Shick admits that some thought Airmen couldn't do the same jobs as their Army counterparts.

"We quickly organized, trained and equipped our people," said Colonel Shick. "In the end, we proved the nimbleness and the agility of the Air Force to take on new

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“ We are aware that we are helping carry the torch ... The Tuskegee Airmen set the standard for excellence; their legacy is well known. That's what we're trying to do here.

”

- 1st Lt. Edward Torres  
Detachment 1 director of staff





Courtesy photo

**A member of the Tuskegee Airmen does an ammo inspection prior to a bomber escort mission during World War II.**

### CONVOY, From Page 4

tactical missions.”

The hard work and dedication of Detachments 1 and 2 have made an impression on Army Col. David Gaffney, 457th Transportation Battalion commander.

“They are critical enablers that augment the Army to allow us to continue our mission,” he said. “They have successfully transformed Airmen to troops on the ground that can fully support our operations.”

Members of Detachment 2 said they take pride knowing that they share parallels with the Tuskegee Airmen.

“We are aware that we are helping carry the torch,” said 1st Lt. Edward Torres, Detachment 2 director of staff. “The Tuskegee Airmen set the standard for excellence; their legacy is well known. That’s what we’re trying to do here. We are setting the bar for the next group of escorts.”

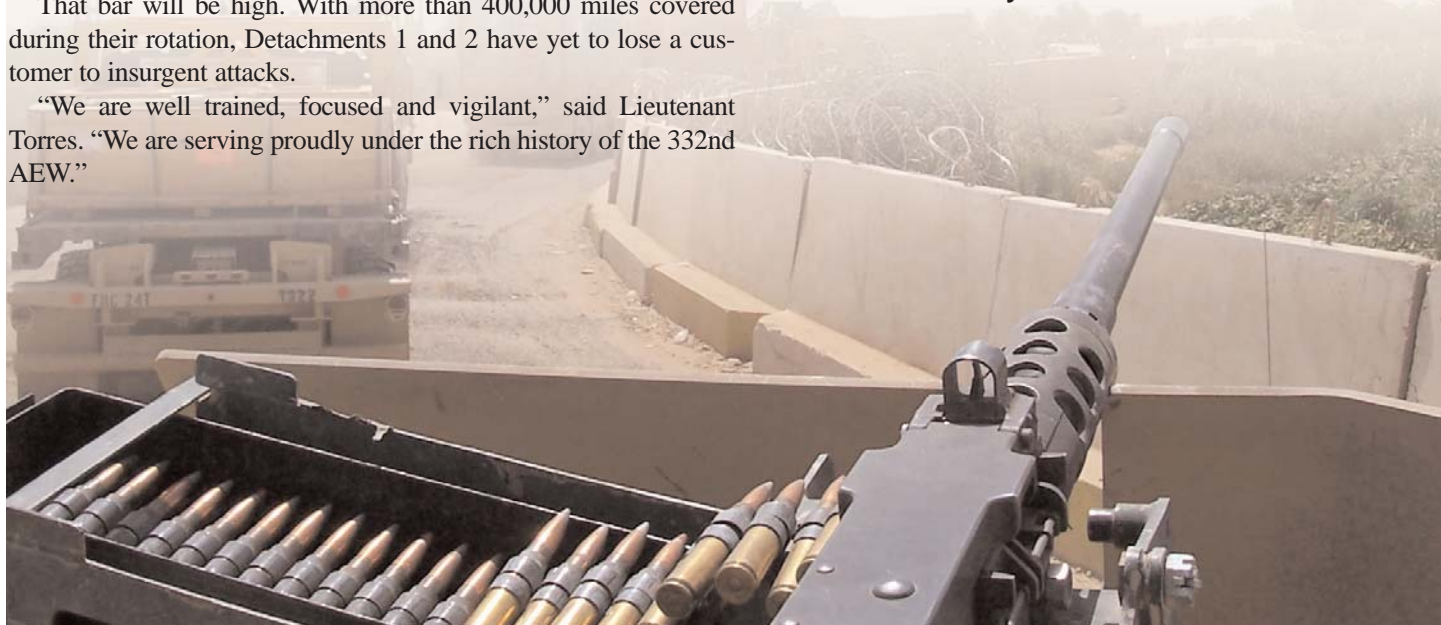
That bar will be high. With more than 400,000 miles covered during their rotation, Detachments 1 and 2 have yet to lose a customer to insurgent attacks.

“We are well trained, focused and vigilant,” said Lieutenant Torres. “We are serving proudly under the rich history of the 332nd AEW.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chad Chisholm

**Staff Sgt. Rebecca Turnipseed, Detachment 1, conducts inspections on a .50-caliber machine gun prior to a convoy escort mission. Like the Tuskegee Airmen before them, Air Force escort units have yet to lose a customer to enemy attack.**



## AFPC notifies Airmen of criminal activity exposing personal info

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas – The Air Force is notifying more than 33,000 Airmen that a security breach has occurred in the online Assignment Management System.

The notification comes after Air Force Personnel Center officials here alerted Air Force and federal investigators to unusually high activity on a single user's AMS account in June.

AMS, an online program used for assignment preferences and career management, contains career information on officers and enlisted members as well as some personal information like birth dates and social security numbers, according to Col. Lee Hall, director of assignments at AFPC. It does not contain personal addresses, phone numbers or specific dependent information.

A malicious user accessed approximately half of the officer force's individual information while only a handful of non-commissioned officers were affected, according to Lt. Col. John Clarke, AFPC's deputy director of Personnel Data Systems. They used a legitimate user's login information to access and/or download individuals' personal information.

"We notified Airmen as quickly as we could while still following criminal investigation procedures with the OSI," said Maj. Gen. Tony Przybyslawski, AFPC commander. "Protecting Airmen's

personal information is something we take very seriously and we are doing everything we can to catch and prosecute those responsible under the law.

"We notified the individuals involved outlining what happened and how they can best insulate themselves from this potential risk. We've taken steps to increase our system security. We're working with all AF agencies to identify vulnerabilities. We must keep our data protected," the general added.

In the meantime, officials say officers may log-in to the virtual Military Personnel Flight at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/vs/> to see if their information was viewed. If it was, they will receive a pop-up banner after login which will provide additional information. The small number of enlisted members who have had their information viewed will be contacted directly.

Officials also state that Airmen may decide to follow Federal Trade Commission guidelines for dealing with identity theft at <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/index.html>. Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, beginning Sept. 1, 2005, everyone is entitled to one free credit check annually, to request this free report visit <http://www.annualcreditreport.com>. Any Airman who believes he or she has become a victim of identity theft, should contact their base OSI and legal office.

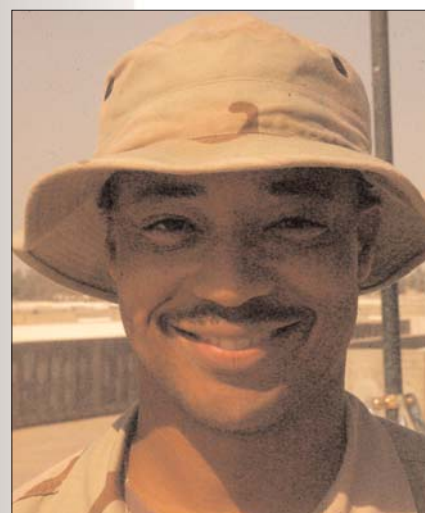
### IDEAS THAT WORK

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### BALAD AIR BASE UNIFORM TIPS

**Floppy hats must hang naturally and will be worn squarely on the head. The brim will not be flipped, pinned or altered, but may be ironed. Floppy hat guidelines can be found in 332 AEWI 36-2903, section 2.5.1.3. [Duty Uniform]**



**Right**



**Wrong**



**TUSKEGEE, From Page 1**

miles per hour, and took a heavy toll on bomber formations during the nine months between the time it entered service and the end of the war.

The pilots of the 332nd FG developed tactics to prevent the new jets from destroying American and British bombers. They found that the P-51 could recover from a dive faster than the ME 262, and was generally more maneuverable.

Exploiting the weaknesses of the German aircraft, combined with strict discipline (no pilot was allowed to leave the bombers unprotected to chase enemy aircraft) the group maintained a perfect escort record and destroyed several ME 262s in the air, while the very bombers they escorted destroyed hundreds more on the ground.

The second German aircraft, known as the Komet was designed to take off and immediately climb up past the bomber formation (it could climb at 16,000 feet per minute), then fire its rockets at the bombers as it came back down.

While this didn't present much of a threat to the 332nd FG pilots, the Komet's methods proved deadly for several bomber crews escorted by other fighter groups.

Again, the 332nd FG exploited the Komet's weaknesses and destroyed a few of these aircraft in the air, while bombers destroyed the airfields and factories that housed and produced them.



Photo courtesy of Air Education and Training Command

**The Tuskegee Airmen used the top-of-the-line P-51 Mustang Aircraft. The aircraft boasted a top speed of 437 miles per hour and could easily match any enemy piston-engine aircraft.**

In addition to learning to fly new types of fighters and facing new weapons systems, the men of the 332nd FG moved four times before the war ended, each time moving their aircraft, personal gear, maintenance shops and quarters and setting up operations at the new, usually totally undeveloped, location.

They first moved to Capodechino, Italy, in April 1944, then to Ramitelli, Italy, the following month.

They remained at Ramitelli for nearly a year, moving to Cattolica, Italy, in May of 1945, flying the last of their escort missions from there.

They moved to Lucera, Italy, in July 1945, in preparation for a return to the U.S., with the expectation of reforming for combat in the Pacific.

The end of the war, however, also spelled the end of the 332nd FG, and the unit was inactivated October of 1945.

The 332nd FG fought hard to win the respect they deserved, and fought hard to win the war, earning a unique place in history and setting an unmatched record in spite of the challenges they faced.

Today, the legend of the 332nd FG lives on in its new active combat unit here at Balad.

## Diamond notes

**Airmen preparing to re-deploy should contact the customs office for guidance on what items are acceptable to transport back to their home duty stations.**

From the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing First Sergeant.

## Balad AB Religious Schedule

### Protestant - Traditional

Sundays  
7:30 a.m. Hospital, 9:30 a.m. Provider Chapel, 10 a.m. Freedom Chapel

### Protestant - Gospel

Sundays  
11 a.m. - Sustainer Indoor Theater, 11:30 Freedom Chapel, 7 p.m. - Provider Chapel

### Protestant- Praise and Worship

Sundays  
9:30 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater, 5:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel, 6:30 p.m. MWR Tent 29th SPT BN  
Sundays and Wednesdays  
7 p.m. Freedom Chapel

### Protestant - Contemporary

Sundays  
10 a.m. 299th FSB Tent Chapel, 11 a.m. Town Hall  
**Latter Day Saints**

Sundays  
1p.m. Provider Chapel, 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

### Liturgical- Protestant

Sundays  
8 a.m. Provider Chapel

### Samoan Congregational Service

Sundays  
4 p.m. Provider Chapel

### Roman Catholic Mass

Mondays - Fridays: 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel  
Wednesdays

11 a.m. Air Force Hospital

### Saturdays

5 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel (4:45 p.m. Reconciliation)  
Sundays

8:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel, 9 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel,

11 a.m. Provider Chapel, 3:30 p.m. "626" Chapel (for Special Ops personnel only)

### Church of Christ

### Sunday

11 a.m. Aviation Village 1, 1-245 ATS/Conf. room

### Islamic Prayer

### Fridays

13:30 p.m. Provider Chapel

### Jewish Prayer

### Fridays

6:30 p.m. Provider Chapel Annex

## Meet your neighbor



Photo by Senior Airman Shaun Emery

Tech. Sgt. Steve Lopez

**Home station:** Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

**Unit:** 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing weapons safety office

**Hobbies:** Mountain biking

**How do you contribute to the mission?**

Oversight of all explosives related issues as they pertain to Air Force assets.

**What is your favorite aspect of deployment?**

All the sunny days.

**Besides your family, what do you miss back home?**

Sushi and Mill Avenue in Tempe.

## Know what this is?

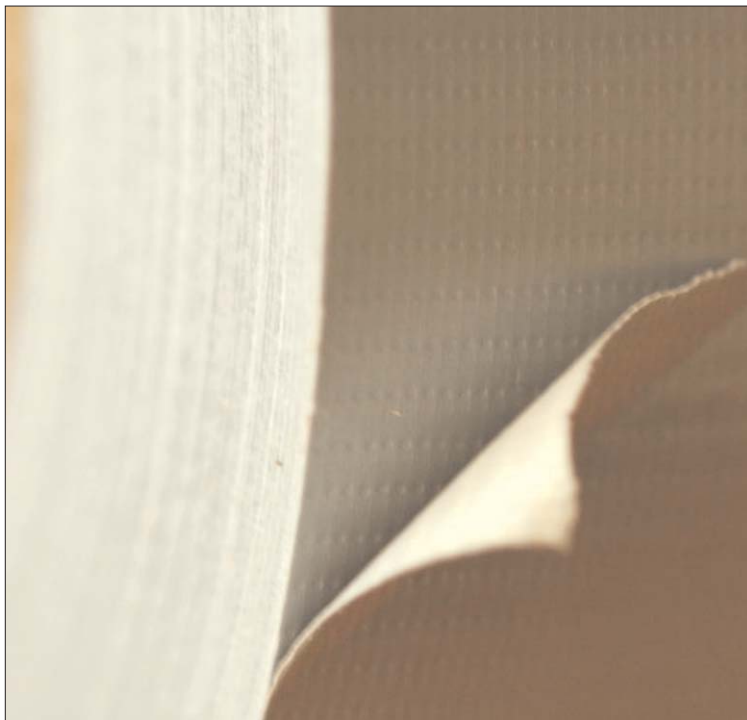
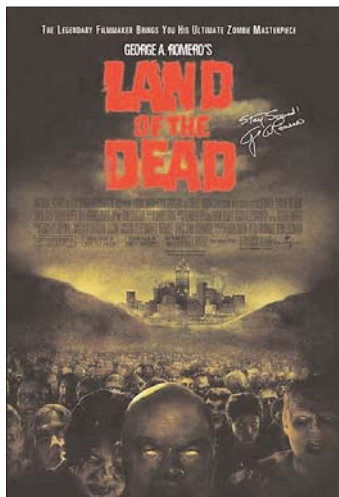


Photo by Senior Airman Tim Beckham

If you can identify the object, send us an e-mail at [redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil](mailto:redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil). Last week's photo of a copper master lock was first identified by Senior Airman Tyler Hand, 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron.

# Sustainer movie schedule

Schedule is subject to change



### Today

3 p.m. - Batman Begins  
6 p.m. - Duece Bigalow 2  
9 p.m. - Duece Bigalow 2

### Saturday, August 27

3 p.m. - Land of the Dead  
6 p.m. - Duece Bigalow 2  
9 p.m. - Batman Begins

### Sunday, August 28

3 p.m. - The Perfect Man  
6 p.m. - Duece Bigalow 2  
9 p.m. - Mr. & Mrs. Smith

### Monday, August 29

3 p.m. - Duece Bigalow 2

6 p.m. - Batman Begins  
9 p.m. - The Perfect Man

### Tuesday, August 30

3 p.m. - Mr. and Mrs. Smith  
6 p.m. - Shark Boy and Lava Girl  
9 p.m. - Batman Begins

### Wednesday, August 31

3 p.m. - Madagascar  
6 p.m. - Duece Bigalow 2  
9 p.m. - Kingdom of Heaven

### Thursday, September 1

3 p.m. - Batman Begins  
6 p.m. - Land of the Dead  
9 p.m. - The Perfect Man

